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ABSTRACT

Emphasis is placed on the need for and techniques in the development of critical reading at the primary level. The following steps for teaching reading as thinking and as acquiring ideas are presented: (1) developing purposes for reading, (2) developing habits of reasoning, and (3) developing habits of testing predictions. Underlying principles include (1) means of identifying purposes for reading, (2) adjustment of reading rate to the nature and difficulty of materials being read, (3) reading observation, (4) comprehension development, and (5) training in the fundamental skills of discussion, further reading, and additional study writing. The aims of directed reading-thinking activities are to teach children the skills of extracting information of predictive value from a given context and to provide, through the group medium, thinking reader behavior that will be useful to pupils doing undirected reading. Illustrations of directed reading activities at grades 1 and 3 are presented. References are included after individual articles. (This document previously announced as ED 017 157.) (JB)

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Teaching Critical Reading at the Primary Level

by

Russell G. Stauffer
University of Delaware

and

Ronald Cramer
Oakland University

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SUMMARY

The International Reading Association attempts, through its publications, to provide a forum for a wide spectrum of opinion on reading. This policy permits divergent viewpoints without assuming the endorsement of the Association.

FOREWORD

IN EVEN HIS INITIAL STEPS in learning to read, a child should do more than mouth words, more than acquire a sight vocabulary through a systematic phonetic attack or through repetitive, familiarizing experiences with individual words. From the start, true reading is thinking; it is acquiring ideas expressed in sentences; it is not mere word recognition, not the sequential pronunciation of printed words. Comprehension is always involved in reading.

Teaching Critical Reading at the Primary Level develops an additional and fundamental aspect of reading which all teachers of reading should understand and stress in daily instruction. The child should be so taught that he becomes accustomed to reading with purpose, deciding whether what he is reading is reasonable and logical, and predicting what are the likely next steps in the selection's unfolding development or what will be the probable outcome. To his reading, the child should customarily summon any already familiar concepts that will contribute to his understanding and to his ability to evaluate what he is reading, to decide if the ideas in the selection square with what he already knows or if any of the "non-squaring-up" new ideas are so conclusively presented that he must modify his previously held concepts. In other words, he should become a habitually critical reader.

Russell Stauffer and Ronald Cramer have prepared an IRA Reading Aid that should become a handbook for all school personnel involved in primary reading instruction. This aid will be a fine corrective for one-sided reading programs that overstress a mechanically phonetic or a memoriter approach in the primary grades. Both preservice and in-service teachers and supervisory staffs will profit from a thoughtful consideration of this clear exposition of critical reading at the primary level.

MILDRED A. DAWSON
President, 1966-1967
International Reading Association

Chapter 1

DIRECTED READING-THINKING ACTIVITY: OVERVIEW

• The Need for Critical Reading

WHILE THE PHONICS versus the whole-word method controversy has been raging, a far more significant change has been occurring quietly behind the scene. Articles dealing with reading and thinking have been appearing with increasing frequency in professional periodicals. Even the most ardent phonic advocates write about the need for reading with comprehension. In fact, it seems that all people agree that reading without understanding is not reading, and many agree that the reading and thinking processes are almost identical. It is ideas and actions such as these that presage the quiet revolution and give evidence of the increasing concern on the national scene that reading be taught as a thinking process.

The Round Robin

Concern about reading and thinking and about practices to develop thinking readers was ushered in during the silent reading era of the early twentieth century (*6*). Great concern was expressed about the prevailing "round-robin" oral reading practices. These were the practices whereby the pupils studied a reading lesson, usually at home, so as to be prepared to take turns reading it orally in school. As authorities pointed out, these practices did no more than develop word callers.

Now, in the middle years of the twentieth century, the concern is with the prevailing "round-robin" silent reading practices. These are the practices whereby the teacher asks all the questions, usually questions of fact; and the pupils read to find the literal answers to the teacher-asked questions. This mechanized, rote reproduction approach to reading bypasses the need for logical, creative, and evaluative thinking on the part of pupils. All pupils need to do is reproduce the facts, usually in sequence, to satisfy the teacher's

questions. As authorities are now pointing out, these practices do no more than develop nonthinking fact parrots.

It has taken almost a half-century to effect marked changes in classroom practices and to eliminate, in large part, the round-robin oral reading procedures. In the process, authorities went so far as to ignore oral reading entirely (*6*). As Vera Paul (*7*) indicated in 1946: good oral reading practices were never fully dropped by good classroom teachers. Currently, approximately ninety percent of the schools in the United States use one or another basic reading series. Most of these series spell out plans built almost exclusively around teacher questions and pupil parroted answers. It is hoped that the movement toward the teaching of reading on a thinking basis will not need a half-century to eradicate round-robin silent reading practices.

Reading as Thinking

Reading, like thinking, is a mental process. It requires symbols (words) which stand for ideas or concepts produced by a writer. It requires a reader's use of his experience and knowledge, and the examined yardsticks provided by society, to reconstruct the ideas or concepts produced by the writer. The process of reconstruction begins, goes on, and is in continual change as long as a person reads, and reconstructs after he has read.

The reconstruction process begins with a state of doubt or of desire on the part of the reader. Questions such as: why did the early settlers continue to move westward? or why did man use stick plows exclusively until the seventeenth century? present a perplexity, and require hesitation and specific information. The purposes for reading may reflect personal-social interests and foster a curiosity that might result in vague, partially-declared desires to read; or the purpose may stem from clearly-recognized desires for enjoyment, amusement, or satisfaction. Regardless, this is where the process begins—in the mind of a reader. He must experience the state of doubt or of desire so that his reading will result in one of inquiry or amusement.

Reading, like thinking, always requires the framework of a context. Fiction or nonfiction may be the framework for reading. For thinking, it may be reality or imagination. The act of reflective thinking can follow the same form, whether the stimulus for thought be real or imagined. And the act of reflective reading can follow the same form, whether the context is fiction or nonfiction.

Reading, like thinking, is in continual change. At every turn of a page, or even a phrase, the reader has to take into account the context—its parts, its problems, and its perplexities. From these he must be able to follow the threads of a plot that point the way toward the plot end. Or, he must follow the course of ideas in nonfiction that lead to an outcome or solution. He must assess what he finds, weigh it, accept it or reject it, or alter his objectives.

It is apparent, therefore, that both reading and thinking start with a state of doubt or of desire. It is apparent also that the process of reconstructing goes on as inquiry or discovery, until the doubt is resolved, the perplexity settled, or the pleasure attained.

Why Group Instruction?

Training in reading that embodies the dynamics of discovery and accuracy results in a systematic examination of ideas. Such training is best accomplished in a group situation where discussion can do for thinking what observing real objects does for seeing. Group directed reading-thinking activities help a pupil become aware of discrepancies between his and other interpretations of the same passage or idea, and force him to weigh the evidence in favor of alternative interpretations. Convictions and doubts from one's personal world can be compared and contrasted with those of others. Then, by seeing differences between ideas, it becomes possible for each to modify his own world if he wishes. Furthermore, as each reader in the group hears a variety of interpretations of the same context, he sees also that the usefulness of each proposal must be tested in its own right (*1*).

Obviously, to develop sound thinking skills during group instruction there can be no subjugation of the individual to an organized "brainwashing" for the purpose of imposing an idea or a dogma. Rather, there must be a free reading-thinking circumstance that permits students to better understand the effects of reciprocal and systematic judgment regardless of their age. The aim is to provide the learner with a set of skills over which he has control, and with which he can make judgments when he is reading and thinking on his own. Students trained this way do not become docile, unimaginative, or stereotyped in their reading.

Freedom to declare purposes—to speculate, whether dealing with fact or fiction—has, as its concomitant, a responsibility to observe all available clues, to order them, and to draw forth hypotheses or speculations that are within the realm of plausibility. Once a student

has become involved in a reading situation through the use of his own ideas, he will want to read to test his ideas. This self-actualizing tendency has tremendous motivating potential (*8*). Students who help create a reading climate, strive also to maintain it; and they do so with an astonishing degree of integrity. When pupils realize that it is the boldness of their thinking that is being sought, they also realize that the experience is better than parroting; in fact, it is invigorating.

The teacher has to protect the reader from arrogant, autocratic, and unwarranted teacher-asked questions (*9*). Peremptory questions breed immediate, blasé, uninterested replies. Such a course gradually but surely creates the impression that all the thinking is done by the teacher and nothing remains for the pupil to do but to parrot back book facts.

The following adaptation is typical of instruction given in the teacher's manual of a recently revised basic reader series. The instructions are for use at the third grade level.

> Explain: Our story for today is about a hungry mother lion and two hungry cubs. They went searching for food in the jungle. Look at the pictures in the story. See if you can tell what they found. What have the lions found in the first picture? The first part of the story tells that they also found juicy bugs. Why do you think the lion cubs are standing up and sniffing? Let's look at the next picture. What has the mother lion found? Explain that the story answers this last question.
>
> Suggest: I think you'll have fun reading the story to find out.

In sharp contrast is the circumstance in which the teacher provides the materials and the conditions by which pupil curiosity will be directed so that reading will have an intellectual aim and will produce inquiry. The natural inquisitiveness of children is converted into an ability to find things out and to ask questions in such a way as to increase knowledge. There is a vital difference.

It should be readily apparent that becoming a high calibre thinking-reader may not be left to chance. Wellington and Wellington (*15*), after reviewing research dealing with learner-teacher cooperation and democratic or autocratic atmospheres in the classroom, have this to say: "With lack of evidence, then, to support either position conclusively, we suggest only that in its very nature (no matter how kindly, friendly, noncritical the teacher) autocratic leadership imposes ideas in place of helping people to discover theirs. This is a vital difference."

● Directed Reading-Thinking Activity: Group Type

A group type directed reading-thinking activity has two distinguishing features. All members of a group read at about the same level of competency and all read the same material, regardless of its particular nature, at the same time. The primary objective is to develop skill in reading critically. A critical reading performance requires each reader to become skilled at determining purposes for reading. Either the reader declares his own purposes or, if he adopts the purposes of others, he makes certain he knows how and why he is doing so. He also speculates about the nature and complexity of the answers he is seeking by using his experience and knowledge relevant to the circumstances. Then he reads to test his purposes and his assumptions. As a result, he may 1) find the answer(s) he is seeking literally and completely stated, 2) find only partial answers or implied answers and face the need to either restate his purposes in light of the new information gained or to suspend judgment until more reading has been done, or 3) need to declare completely new purposes.

This problem solving approach to reading may be used with fiction and nonfiction. The purpose in either circumstance will vary according to the reader's ability to perform critically and creatively and to his level of maturity. His reading rate will vary according to the purposes declared and the nature and difficulty of the material.

Proof that answers have been found either in part or completely may be provided to the group by means of oral reading or by oral or written reporting. Each means of providing proof should be used. At the primary level more frequent use may be made of oral means of providing proof than at the intermediate level and beyond.

Group sizes considered most acceptable for good teaching range from eight to twelve members. Groups of this size permit pupils to compare and contrast their thinking with that of others in the dynamics of interacting minds. Each can observe how others use evidence, make assumptions or educated guesses, adapt rate, provide proof, and perform creatively.

Certain basic principles and assumptions underlie the effective development of a group directed reading-thinking activity:

I. Identifying Purposes for Reading

   A. Individual pupil's purposes determined by
      1. Pupil experience, intelligence, and language facility
      2. Pupil interests, needs, and goals

3. Group interests, needs, and goals
4. Influence of the teacher
5. Influence of the content
    a. nature and difficulty of the material
    b. title and subtitles and the like
    c. pictures, maps, graphs, charts
    d. linguistic clues

B. Group purposes determined by the
1. Experiences, language facility, and intelligence of each member of the group
2. Interests, needs, and goals of each member of the group
3. Consensus of the group and/or of subgroups
4. Influence of the teacher
5. Influence of the content

II. Adjusting rate of reading to the purposes declared and to the nature and difficulty of the material. This adjustment is made to

A. Survey: to overview a selection or text
B. Skim: to read swiftly and lightly for single points
C. Scan: to read carefully from point to point
D. Read critically or study: to read, to reread, and to reflect so as to pass judgment.

III. Observing the Reading

A. Noting abilities to adjust rate to purpose and materials
B. Recognizing comprehension needs and providing help by clarifying
1. Purposes
2. Concepts
3. Need for rereading

C. Acknowledging requests for help with word recognition needs by providing immediate help in the use of
1. Context clues: meaning clues
2. Phonetic clues: sound clues
3. Structural clues: sight clues
4. Glossary clues: meaning, sound, and sight clues

IV. Developing Comprehension

A. Checking on individual and group purposes
B. Staying with or redefining purposes
C. Recognizing the need for other source material
D. Developing concepts

V. Fundamental Skill Training Activities: discussion, further reading, additional study writing

A. Increasing powers of observation (directed attention)

B. Increasing powers of reflection by

1. Abstracting: reorganizing old ideas, conceiving new ideas, distinguishing between ideas, generalizing about ideas, and making inductions and analyses
2. Judgment: formulating propositions and assessing them
3. Reasoning: inferring and demonstrating, and systematizing knowledge deductively

C. Mastering the skills of word recognition: picture and language context analysis, phonetic and structural analysis, and dictionary usage.

D. Developing vocabulary: pronunciations, word meanings, semantic dimensions, analogous words, contrasted words, word histories, new words.

E. Developing adeptness in conceptualization and cognitive functioning: making and testing inferences; particulars, classes, and categories; reversibility; mobile equilibrium, and conservation.

F. Mastering the skills of oral reading: voice, enunciation, and expression, reading to prove a point or to present information; reading to entertain (prose and poetry); choral reading .

● Three Basic Steps in a Directed Reading-Thinking Activity

Certain basic steps underlie the effective development of a group-directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA), and can be used whenever a group of children are dealing with the same material at the same time under teacher guidance. The plan is especially useful when basic readers are used, but the plan can be used whenever textbooks or other common materials are employed.

Developing Purposes for Reading

The key step in a directed reading-thinking activity is the very first step—developing purposes for reading. "Purposes" or "questions" or "set" represent the directional and motivational influences that get a reader started, keep him on course, and produce the vigor and potency and push to carry him through to the end.

Purposes for reading represent the key element in versatility. The

versatile reader adjusts rate of reading according to his purposes for reading, and to the nature and difficulty of the material being read. By focusing on purposes for reading from the very beginning of formal reading instruction, the reader acquires an attitude toward reading and an appreciation of the use and value of purposes for directing the reading act. Granted that in the early phases of the instructional program, the young reader will not be too articulate about what he is doing; but by repeated experience he will, as he matures, begin to see how to be deliberate. Of all the reading skills, the one that authorities and teachers and readers bemoan as lacking most is that of versatility. It seems honest to conclude that a principal reason why students complete high school and college without accomplishing this high-order reading skill reflects the use of inappropriate methodology from the very beginning of reading instruction.

The Teacher. The teacher must avoid being the instrument of authoritarian indoctrination. Her teaching must be such that the group is never intimidated by the tyranny of a right *teacher* answer —one which the group dare not question. Tyranny, if it is to reside anywhere, whether it is in the use of basic reader stories and selections or material from other sources, must rest in the text and in the group.

If a teacher is to live up to this affirmation and so direct a reading activity that pupil thinking is both required and honored, she will be in a very important sense emotionally removed from the give and take of the reading-thinking process. Her role is that of an agitator, as one second-grade boy described it, an intellectual agitator. In this capacity, she asks and asks again, What do you think? and Why do you think so? and Read the line(s) that prove it. These directives are sufficiently specific to stir the minds of all school-age children. When the pupils state what they think, express their opinions, and listen to the ideas voiced by others in the group, then they will be reading to see who in the group is right or wrong or partially right or partially wrong and why this is so.

In these circumstances the pupils will not be reading to find an answer to satisfy a teacher-asked question. They will not be preoccupied with the fear of being wrong and rousing signs of displeasure in the teacher. Neither will they be preoccupied with currying the teacher's favor. In turn, if they fail to find an answer, the blame of failure will not be projected on the teacher, since it was not a teacher question. This is the degree to which, and the sense in which, the

teacher is emotionally freed from asserting the tyranny of a right answer.

The Group. In turn, all members of the group are involved in the act of creating hypotheses, conjectures, purposes; using them to guide their reading; and reading to test their significance. It is here that the adequacy of reading and of meaning is tested in the context of the group. It is the group which demands that individual predictions, to be acknowledged, must be warranted on the basis of available evidence. The group sits as auditors, authorized to examine the evidence, verify the questions and answers, and state the results.

The Story. On the other hand, well-written stories reflect the element of things happening—conflicts, issues, incidents, and eventualities. These are factors that maintain and propel interest and carry the reader on to the end. The ever-present human-interest factors provide the motivation that facilitates the reader's grasp of the social relationships of the story heroes as he follows their problems. This is what permits the reader to grasp the story and to reduce human behavior to its elements. In short, because a story makes sense, it keeps the motto "on-with-the-story" uppermost in the mind of the reader. Events that lead from the beginning to the end unfold in gripping sequence and hold the reader's attention, not releasing it until the climax is reached.

Pictures vital to the telling of a story must be built into the presentation of a plot. Pictures must be planned and designed to help carry a plot forward; to aid the reader by strengthening, reinforcing, and developing visual images; to establish and develop concepts; and to heighten the drama and the interest. At no time must the pictures reveal that which is intended to be told in a story. In other words, pictures as well as words provide the medium for telling a story. If it is allowed that a good picture is worth a thousand words, then it must be agreed that picture and story should not repeat the same thousand words.

Illustrations. By way of illustration children can be asked to proceed by examining certain amounts of evidence and making predictions. They may examine a title and a first picture or they may read the entire first page and make predictions or they may read one-third of the story or one-half of the story or read all except the climax page and make predictions. As you can see, if the title is used as the principal source of making predictions, divergent thinking will be

invited. Now the children may be as creative as possible within the limits of probability suggested by the title. When, however, they have read all except the climax page, convergent thinking will be operating and the clues that have been provided should lead the children to predict quite accurately what the outcome of the plot or the result of a presentation may be.

A group of first grade children, when asked to react to a story with the title "Two Boys Helped," made the following predictions. The boys may build a house for a pet dog. They may help Dad in the garden. They may help mother with the groceries. They may help play ball.

Then the children were invited to examine the first picture. The picture showed the two boys, one wearing what appeared to be a cowboy hat. The boys were talking to each other. The children saw rather readily that their predictions made by using only the title were neither confirmed nor rejected by the evidence provided in the first picture. They saw, too, that they could modify their predictions or make entirely new ones. One boy thought that the two boys were going to play cowboy. Another one said he believed the tall boy had work to do and could not play because he had to help his father. As can be imagined, the children in the group now read the first page of this story with a considerable amount of zest, eager to find out which one of these predictions was right or wrong.

A second grade level group was asked to read the first two pages of a story entitled "Paper Umbrellas." Of course, this gave them an opportunity to examine the pictures on the two pages. They were asked to stop at the end of these two pages and predict what they thought would follow and how or why it would follow. The pictures showed a boy apparently selling newspapers and an old lady who seemed to have dropped something. The story content on these two pages indicated that the boy was selling newspapers on a very hot afternoon. Suddenly, a strong wind came up. The old lady approached to buy a newspaper and in opening her purse dropped a set of pictures that she was carrying. The children predicted that the newspaper boy would help the old lady find her pictures. They noticed that the newspaper boy had put a stone weight on the newspapers and the papers would be safe. They thought, though, that some of the pictures might have blown so far away that the boy would have difficulty finding them. They felt that with the evidence at hand they could hardly tell as yet how this story would be about "Paper Umbrellas."

These two illustrations of pupil purpose setting under the direc-

tion of a teacher should indicate with some clarity how to proceed. It should also show how responsive children will be, how the predictions will reflect their own experiences and interests and knowledge, and how motivating purposes can be once they are self-declared.

Developing Habits of Reasoning

This then leads to a second aspect of a directed reading-thinking activity—reasoning while reading. Interestingly enough the word "reason" is derived etymologically from the word "ratio." A ratio means a balance. What is it that the reader balances while he is reading? He balances his experience and his knowledge and the yardsticks provided by society that he has learned to use because they are socially and culturally acceptable against those of the authors. To the degree that the reader has examined carefully the experiences and knowledge that he uses, to that degree he can be a critical reader. In other words critical reading can be done from the very beginning and regular systematic instruction in critical reading can readily be initiated at the first reader level.

To return to the first illustration, the story "The Two Boys Helped," you will remember that, when the children had an opportunity to examine the picture, they already were modifying their thinking or they were reasoning with the evidence. To modify their thinking required that they suspend judgment, keep an open mind, and take as full advantage as possible of whatever evidence was available. At the end of the first page they had learned that the big hat was a new hat and that the boy who owned the hat was giving it to his friend so that he could play with it for the afternoon.

Now the children reasoned that somehow this hat was involved with the idea of helping. Even so, they were uncertain as to just how the hat would help, but as already indicated the children were reasoning and responding critically.

In the story "The Paper Umbrellas" the predictions quite clearly indicate the degree to which the children used the evidence in order to reason about story outcomes. They thought that the boy would help the lady pick up the papers. They also thought that the strong gust of wind might blow the pictures so far away that it would be difficult to locate them. On the next two pages of this story they discovered that the boy had to move very fast to prevent one of the pictures from being blown down an open manhole. He did manage to save the picture. However, when he looked about, he saw people approaching a bus holding newspapers over their heads. Now he

was concerned about his own newspapers and the source of the papers that the people were carrying.

Again the children worked with the information that they had acquired. Some children predicted that the newspapers being used as umbrellas had been taken from the boy's stand. Others thought that the people had carried the newspapers with them from their offices or places of work. Still other children felt that if the people had taken the newspapers they had paid for them. One lad thought that perhaps since the boy was gathering the pictures, the old lady stood by his newspapers and took care of them.

Developing Habits of Testing Predictions

In each instance it is apparent how the children are using evidence to reason and predict. This leads to the third step in a directed reading-thinking activity. Testing to find out whether or not predictions made or hypotheses declared have been right or wrong is done by reading silently, and then proving to the group that predictions were either right or wrong by reading particular lines in the story orally. In these circumstances, though, it should be apparent that there is immediate feedback, that the data processing is a continuous one, and that the processing is guided by pupil directives. Most strategic in this procedure is the instant and constant ongoing testing that is done as the reader either substantiates or denies his hypothesis and is required to prove to the group what he has found.

● Conclusion

In conclusion then it should be apparent that reading is a continuous process and as such, constantly subjects the reader's mind to new information requiring him to adjust his thinking. Thus the reader's progress through a story is marked by a steady change of ideas. Each word, each fact, each concept, each line or sentence requires a reader to react, accept, reject, associate, and assimilate. To the degree that the reader can deal flexibly with the barrage of information, to that degree will he be an able reader. Put differently the reader is asked constantly to suspend judgment. Many readers deal in the suspended judgment act without ever being fully cognizant of what they are doing. If they were, there would be more people about who would refuse to jump to conclusions until all the evidence was in or, if they did reach a conclusion on limited evidence, they would realize that this is what had been done.

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Chapter 2

DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY ILLUSTRATION: FIRST READER LEVEL

THE AIM in a directed reading-thinking activity (DRTA) in a group situation is twofold. The first aim is to teach children the skill of extracting information of predictive value from a given context, either fiction or nonfiction in nature. The information each pupil extracts depends on how the information fits into his store of experience and knowledge. At times the ideas or assumptions called into use interact with each other freely; sometimes, more rigidly. The likelihood of extracting information of good predictive value is increased if the ideas and assumptions are flexibly related to each other. When this is the case, various combinations can be examined and their usefulness tested as the material is read.

To accomplish effective utilization of this skill in different content areas, it is necessary that DRTA training be given using materials in different areas of interest in both fiction and nonfiction. If the skill is accomplished first on fiction-type materials, its transfer to other materials is not necessarily automatic. Pupils must see the relevance of the reading-thinking process in all areas. This way they can continuously relate what is learned in reading class to the job of being a student and to the reading tasks of everyday life. In so doing, it is hoped that the skill acquired can be used immediately in a practical way.

The second aim is to provide, through the group medium, ways of behaving as a thinking reader that will be useful to pupils when reading on their own—as in an individualized situation, for example. In a group situation in which pupil thinking is the intent, each pupil's fund of experience and knowledge which is relevant to the material being read and which helps or hinders him in calling up ideas and making assumptions of predictive value can become clearer. What a pupil "sees" in a story or article, a title or subtitle, a picture or illustration, depends on the way he has perceived and

organized previous information of a related nature. He is the one who must see how things are alike in some respects and different in others.

If the information received earlier is too generalized, too close to the nonverbal level, too dependent on haphazard concrete-perceptual experiences, the pupil may become aware of these inadequacies in this group situation. Otherwise, left on his own—or educated in nonthinking, parrot-like circumstances—he may never learn to question the validity of his ideas and concepts. He operates using his loosely-structured concepts inappropriately and fails, therefore, to extract information of predictive value. Hence he continues to perpetuate his blunders and his shortcomings. Persistent and intelligent effort is required; otherwise the new constructs a pupil makes will be fabricated at the same low level as the constructs he has already made.

● Pupil Awareness of Conceptual Resources

How can a student become aware of his own conceptual resources and limitations in a group-directed reading situation? The role of the group can provide the milieu conducive to sound mental construction work rather than compounding wrong concepts. The favorable conditions are these:

1. All in the group are examining the same material.
2. Each pupil reacts in terms of his own private stock of experience and knowledge.
3. Because pupils share ideas, the spirit is competitive and fosters the will to do; it *motivates.*
4. The information extracted and the assumptions made are compared and contrasted, and likenesses and differences are noted.
5. The activity itself provides the *means* for the creative use of ideas.
6. Each pupil's personal integrity is at stake.
7. Each pupil's "educated guesses" will need to be defended. They must be proved or disproved.
8. Available evidence will need to be presented to the group for acceptance or rejection. The group is the auditor, the jury, and the judge.
9. Pupils learn to have the strength of their convictions and learn not to be dominated by the loud verbalizer.
10. Pupils learn to respect the thinking of others, to study how they examine evidence and how they prove points.

11. Pupils learn to temper their emotions in the crucible of group interaction, to be enthusiastic without being obnoxious, to rejoice without being offensive, and to accept mistakes without being stifled.

12. All this is done under the direction of the teacher who is prepared. She knows the content, knows the important concepts to be attained, and knows how to promote thinking on the part of others without putting words into their mouths. She knows the *effect* desired.

By arranging the conditions whereby children can interact intellectually as described, they can investigate the hidden processes of their own and of other people's thinking. Then they can avoid being too docile, unimaginative, and stereotyped in their thinking. Furthermore, the authority-dependency relationship orients toward the text and the group, rather than the teacher. A quotation from Abercrombie (*1*) on free group discussions is appropos at this point.

> Perhaps from the educational point of view the most important feature is the wide range of behavior which is useful; in different ways it is as useful to listen as to talk; to agree as to disagree; to criticize as to approve. The topics covered are so varied that no one person can for long retain a dominant position as the most knowledgeable or the most clear-headed. Sooner or later even the cleverest finds himself in a web of confusion out of which he is helped maybe by the most inarticulate. Often indeed it is the academically weak student who can offer a direct common-sense way out of the maze in which they all are stuck. Any one student may be at one moment the teacher, at another the pupil, and the tact, patience and skill which students severally or jointly may command when they undertake to teach another are worth seeing.

Those who are skilled in the business of teacher education will recognize at once that the pursuit of such purposes is primarily a matter of outlook and philosophy. The ends described can be accomplished in almost any kind of learning situation. The child learns from repeated experience that he can think and discover what he wants to know. He acquires a craftsmanship and an artistry. The wonder of knowledge becomes as intriguing as a great adventure.

● A First Reader Level DRTA

In Chapter 1 the outline of a directed reading-thinking activity was presented. Certain basic principles and assumptions underlying the development of an effective group DRTA were declared. Practices in each of the five basic steps were briefly described. It was

pointed out that in essence a DRTA had two parts—a process and a product. The first four steps—Identifying Purposes, Guiding Adjustment of Rate to Purposes and Materials, Observing the Reading, and Developing Comprehension—comprised a process cycle. Each step made during a DRTA sets the cycle in motion: check comprehension, reset purposes, adjust rate, read. In fact, it might be shown that each time a reader stops to reflect, even in the middle of a sentence, he sets a similar cycle in motion—he pauses to check his understanding, decides to proceed with the same or different purpose(s), quickly adjusts rate, and then reads on. The product phase of the DRTA is the extending and refining stage. This is the time when, by direct attack, an attempt is made to increase powers of observation, of reflection, of word recognition, and of conceptualization.

Basic readers are adaptable to the fundamental purposes of a DRTA in a group situation. Controls of vocabulary, concepts, interests, illustrations, and story length make this true. The rate of new word and new concept introduction is controlled, and permits pupils to try comprehension skills learned without being frustrated by such demands. At the primary level in particular, the stories and selections are about events or ideas within the scope of most children's experience. Gradually the content reaches out beyond their experiences—socially, historically, numerically, geographically, aesthetically, scientifically, and humorously—but it does so at a pace that should not overwhelm the students. The length of the selections is such that the material can readily be read in the time limits imposed by the demands of the total curriculum.

In this chapter, DRTA procedures are defined in detail. A typical story will be used. The interacting processes can be carefully examined: pupil-teacher, pupil-pupil, pupil-content.

The story described in detail is a first reader level story, titled "A One-Time Magic Garden" (*3*). It is one of a series of stories prepared to develop reading-thinking skills by means of a well-contrived plot and by paced vocabulary usage. The plot moves forward at a steady pace from the first page or plot introduction page through a series of related episodes to the climax. The title is story binding and helps orient the reader toward the main idea of the plot. The answer to the "One-Time Magic Garden" is not provided until the very end of the story. Curiosity about its meaning helps the reader speculate and stay on course.

*Russell G. Stauffer, Alvina T. Burrows, Mary E. Spencer. "A One-Time Magic Garden," Away We Go, pp. 101-106. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960. (Reproduced by permission of the authors and Holt, Rinehart and Winston.)
Deleted because of copyright restrictions.

● Meeting New Words in Context

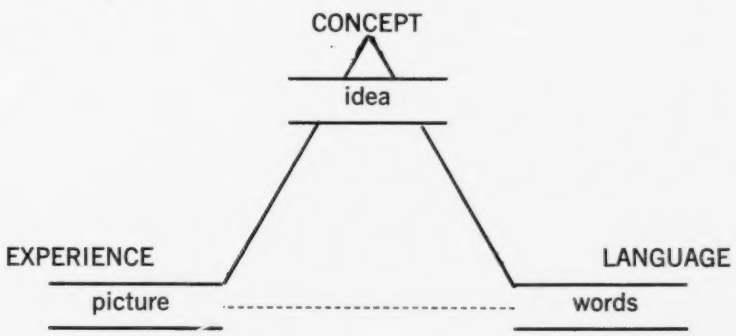
The frequency with which words are met is vital for retention. As any experienced first grade teacher can confirm and any new teacher soon learns, one or two contacts with a word are not enough to effect retention even among the bright children. They can also confirm that presenting words in isolation by rote drill, in order to get needed recontact with a word, seldom does the trick. Flash cards misused are the shackle of the learner, the despair of the naive teacher, and the frustration of the well-meaning parent.

Analysis of vocabulary usage shows that from a strictly "mechanics of reading" point of view, the repetition of old and new words within a story is good. The psychology of learning has for years been clear about the efficacy of meaningful repetition or recontact with what is to be learned. Each new word is used a minimum of four times in the story. The reuse is scattered throughout the story. Stroud (*4*) puts it this way:

> The two great expediencies used to insure retention are thorough initial learning and subsequent practice or review. No matter how thorough the initial learning is, forgetting is to be expected in time unless subsequent practice is engaged in. Such practice may take several forms, as in rereading material previously studied, using the material in different contexts, engaging in symbolical practice by direct recall, class discussion. . . ."

Far more important, though, is the meaningful and appropriate introduction of words according to the natural communication demands of the context and the concepts. The context provides two sources: the language context and the picture context.

Thus each page can provide the basis for many examples of the semantic concept triangle:



The picture provides *experience*—one of the ingredients for meaning. The story provides the language, another ingredient. This is the base of the semantic triangle and provides the foundation for meaning. When the two ingredients are joined in the mind of the reader, a *concept* or idea is fashioned. This is the apex of the triangle and represents the peak attainment or conceptualization.

Since the words are used in a conventional way, agreed upon and accepted by our society, the children who read this story should meet these words in the story context. *The words should not be presented prior to the reading and in isolation.* Because of the appropriate and timely use of the words and because the children will be intent on reading for meaning, the likelihood is high that they will recognize the words on their own. When the pupils are talking and they wish to use any of the words introduced in a story, such as used here, no one needs to stand by to prompt or tell the words. The words and their meanings are quite common. Similarly, no one need stand by when the children read these words as they are used appropriately in a meaningful setting.

If the efficacy of meaning is not enough, the pupils have the opportunity of using, on their own, the phonetic clues and structure clues they have learned. In situations where the teacher writes all new words on the chalkboard and tells the children what the words are, or helps them analyze the words before they meet the words in context, the pupils do not have an opportunity to use the skills they have been taught. The teacher short-circuits pupil learning.

It is common knowledge that "experience is the best teacher." But this is only half the quote—the other half is "particularly if it is secondhand." How true this is. Life is filled with secondhand experiences. In fact, much of what we learn is gained through secondhand experiences. One need not jump off a bridge to understand the danger involved, nor touch a burning match, nor fall on ice, nor lose a dog to find out what to do. Reading is a rich, indispensable, and dynamically vital source for gaining experience. It is paramount, therefore, that from the very beginning children be taught to read in such a way that they acquire this attitude about reading. As early as possible, children need to become sensitive to the fact that reading can give them new ideas and change old ones. Most important in all of this is that the teacher's attitude toward reading be such that it will foster the "reading to learn" attitude.

• Data Processing, Feedback and Testing

One way to program the reading of a selection is to permit the reader to process certain amounts of data or evidence and speculate about events to follow. In this instance, because of the nature of the title, it is suggested that pupil speculation be invited in response to only the title. The predicting (weighing of evidence), data processing (reading), testing (selecting relevant data), and evaluating (confirming or rejecting hypothesis) will be done in four steps:

1. Predict or hypothesize by use of title clues only.
2. Predict by use of first page clues.
3. Predict by use of first three pages of clues or one-half of the story evidence.
4. Predict by use of five-sixths of story or first five pages. Now the reader uses all information except that occurring on the climax page.

If this kind of segmented treatment were given *each* six-page story, one would soon defeat the purpose of a DRTA. The process would soon become as stultifying a routine as what is still the recommended practice in so many other instances: readiness—teacher tells, teacher asks questions; guided silent reading—teacher watches pupils read; comprehension check—pupils answer teacher questions and repeat the story; oral reading—pupils read the page orally taking turns and following in book to detect pupil errors; readiness—; and so on, as the cycle is repeated. In a DRTA procedure, the purpose behind dealing with various amounts of information is to teach children to be reading detectives. Throughout the instruction time pupils must discover for themselves the predictive value of clues in one-sixth of a story, one-fourth, one-half, two-thirds, or five-sixths of a story. It is easy to prove that this kind of thinking-reading performance can be initiated at a first grade level.

Title Clues, Step One. Have the pupils find the name of the story in the Table of Contents. Note, please, that this is not to be done with each story. It would be ridiculous to start each DRTA by turning to the story title in the Table of Contents. A title carefully chosen, not only to name a story, but also to be useful in developing reading-thinking skills, serves many purposes. It can be the equivalent of a central theme and have overall encompassing value. In this illustration the title is highly suggestive as to the possible outcome of the story. Somehow "A One-Time Magic Garden" has special meaning. The trained reader will keep this in mind throughout. All clues, all items of information, are oriented around this idea. The title gives

direction and focus. In this respect it represents an all-embracing set of clues.

The title permits and encourages the use of *divergent* type thinking. This means, as Guilford (*2*) has said, the producing of a diversity of ideas which are logically probable. The ideas are reasonable or credible within the limitations of the facts available. Divergent thinking prompts creative thinking. Torrance (*5*) says:

> . . . the creative reader sensitizes himself to problems, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, something incorrect. This calls for the formation of new relationships and combination, synthesizing relatively unrelated elements in a coherent whole, redefining or transforming certain elements to discover new uses, and building onto what is known. In this search for solutions, there is the operation of ideational fluency (the production of a large number of possibilities). . . .

When the pupils have read the title in the Table of Contents, the teacher asks them to close their books. This is done so that full attention can be given to the use of the title for predicting purposes. Pupils will not be distracted by picture clues or other titles in the Table of Contents. Attention is focused on the task at hand.

Here are some of the predictions made by six-year-olds. The teacher initiated the purpose-setting session by asking this group of ten first graders "What do *you think* a story with a title like this may be about?"

In most instances this question is enough to get things going. On occasion, though, and particularly in the earlier DRTA sessions, it may be helpful to rephrase the question and ask, "What do you think might happen in this story?"

"It may be a trick garden," said one boy. "Maybe it grows only one time and then the people have no food." "This could be a make-believe garden with only fairies and princesses." "Maybe they have the biggest tomatoes; my dad did one year."

Each of these conjectures reflects a use of ideas suggested by the title. Note how each varies and is revealing about the child, his experiences and his language.

How ridiculous it would have been to have urged this teacher to tell the children that this is a story about a giant corn stalk and a giant's garden that grows toys. Such a story betrayal would yield little. Children know about gardens and magic. They know what it means to grow things or how magic might help.

Four of the children made proposals. This is excellent. At times all in a group may offer a different conjecture. At other times, only

one may be offered. At all times the teacher must be ready and willing to accept the responses that develop. If only one response is made or even no response, the occasion is such that it demands a good deal of restraint by the teacher. It is tempting to step in and offer ideas and this might be done on rare occasions. But it is far better to continue and discover what kinds of information are needed to arouse response and to find out later why the title clues did not set them responding. If this kind of teacher reserve is exercised and alertness to additional clues is maintained, the children will gain in thinking power and assurance. They are the ones who must experience the difficulty and discover what to do when this happens. This is certainly not the time for teacher barricades against learning. If the circumstance were one of life or death, then teacher interference would be expected; but this was not the case.

Before going on, the teacher questioned the others in the group by asking which one of the four ideas they thought would be the likely one. Three thought the trick garden idea was good; one thought it would be about tomatoes; and two thought it would be about fairies and princesses. So, all had done some thinking; all had made a decision. There was no coercion.

"How can we find out who may be right?" asked the teacher. In this instance she received a quick reply, "Read!" They knew what it meant to "read to find out."

"Read to the bottom of Page 101, and then close your books," said the teacher.

Children asked to be independent, to recognize a need and know what to do about it, must be trained. One more thing needs to be done from time to time just before the first reading is done. Pupils need to review briefly what to do if they get to a word they do not know. The steps are

1. Read to the end of the sentence.
2. Look for picture clues.
3. Sound it out.
4. Ask for teacher help.

Certainly, to know that they do not know a particular word, the children will first have to "see" the word. Visual discrimination is their first reaction—noting likenesses and differences of structure. Undoubtedly, too, they will then try to sound it out. Now, failing to recognize it, they will use context clues.

However, in reviewing the steps, context clues or meaning clues should always be listed first. The potency of meaning is so great

and the idea of reading for meaning is so important that meaning should always take precedence. Also, once pupils have an idea as to what the word might be, the skills of phonic analysis and structure analysis become more functional.

As soon as the group knew how far they were to read, they "took off." This first picture had helped focus in on the nature of the plot and its direction. Now all knew that children were involved and that the corn was growing tall.

The teacher observed the silent reading and thought of it as the most important time in the entire word-recognition training program. All reading teachers are agreed that the object of instruction is to develop self-reliant, independent, discriminating readers. All are agreed, too, that it is the teacher who sets the climate of a DRTA by words, tone of voice, manner, and skill-training facility. If children are to be self-reliant in their use of word-attack skills, it is the teacher who must direct experiences which will foster such an attitude.

A first step on the road to word recognition independence is to foster an attitude of "try it yourself first, and then get help if you need it." One of the advantages of structured basic reader material is that new words can be so presented as to encourage the reader to try the word on his own before seeking help. This is done by controlling the number of new words on a page; the ratio of new words to running words, or old known words, and the relationship of new words to picture content.

This is only one half of the process, though. If the child is to try out his fund of word-attack skills, he must be given the opportunity. The best opportunity for the child who is learning to read is to meet new words for the first time in a story context. It follows from this that the teacher must not present the new words in isolation in a mistaken notion that she is preparing the child to read. All that is being done in such an instance is preparing the child for a kind of mental servitude—one in which he lacks the freedom and the ability to determine his own word-recognition-skill acumen.

Next in importance is the pupil's willingness to ask for help. Teachers sometimes parry by saying that children will not ask for help. This, of course, is true in a situation where pupils are deprived of the normal, healthy give-and-take of the discovery approach to learning. In such instances the teacher should examine her own behavior as a part of the child's learning environment. Where the teaching environment is open, accepting, scholarly, and understanding, pupils will know that they do not know and will ask for help.

When all books are closed, the comprehension check can be started by a number of teacher questions. She might ask as she did before, "What do you think now?" or "Were you right?" or "What do you think will happen next?" Each serves a particular purpose.

"What do you think now?" and "What do you think will happen next?" set in motion very similar lines of thought. The second question focuses more sharply on "what next" ideas. It invites anticipation and speculation about events to come and calls into play the use of ideas garnered thus far. To make educated guesses, pupils will need to put to work ideas obtained thus far. This means a screening of ideas, an evaluating of ideas, and decision making about events to come in light of events that have occurred. The first question elicits almost the same responses but lets the pupils decide that "what next" ideas are in order. In other words, "What do you think now?" is somewhat less directive than "What do you think will happen next?"

"Were you right?" focuses on the purposes set and an evaluation of *right*, *wrong* or *partially right*. This is a good approach and meets with favorable pupil response. They know whether or not what they had predicted actually occurred. They know, too, that the test of their decision will be to read the lines that prove or disprove or partially support. The question "Were you right?" focuses on proof.

As said before, pupils schooled in the processes of a DRTA will hardly wait to be asked a teacher question. They know that, when all books are closed, comprehension will be checked and evaluated.

In this instance the teacher said, "Well, were any of you right?" The boy who had spoken about a tomato replied immediately, "I wasn't right about the tomato but this may be a magic corn stalk!"

Now the teacher said, "Read the lines that gave you this idea."

The boy opened his book and read eagerly. "This must be magic," said Bill. "Dad just put it in this morning. Then it was little, but see it now."

The oral rereading to prove a point was done with a considerable degree of smoothness and expression. This boy was out to prove a point, and this was his preoccupation—not the saying of words. He did not read on a stilted word-by-word basis or with sing-song, high pitched voice. The reason is obvious: he was providing evidence in defense of a point, not evidence that he could "say" words.

The oral rereading was not motivated by purposes different from the purposes that motivated the original reading. Such notions apply only in situations where the pupils reread a story orally after it has been read silently. Even then the purposes are usually trumped up,

fabricated teacher-purposes that neither motivate the children nor deceive them. They soon realize that all that is wanted is routine pronunciation of the words. In a DRTA circumstance the oral rereading is motivated by the purposes that initiated the silent reading. This is as it should be. Now is the time to read to prove or disprove.

When the lines were read orally, the other members of the group kept their books closed. This required them to listen to the lines being read. Not only did they need to listen, they needed to listen discriminately. They needed to decide whether or not the lines being read were correct and whether they proved the point being defended. This kind of training in listening is of a high order because it requires discerning attentiveness, and these ubiquitous six-year-olds were attentive.

"I think I was right, too," said one of the girls. "I believe it is a trick garden. The story said it was going up as fast as a bird." Then she read orally the lines that supported her reply.

The pupils who discovered their predictions were wrong were not distressed. They had done good thinking. They readjusted their thinking according to the relevancy of the new information. They knew from experience that circumstances like these required flexibility of adjustment. They were developing emotional stability and maturity as well.

"What do you think will happen next?" said the teacher.

"I think they will crawl up on the stalk," said one, "and find some magic."

"I think this stalk isn't strong enough to hold them," said another.

"I think they will grow a lot of magic corn and have the best popcorn in the country!" said a third.

"Read Pages 102 and 103 and see who is right," said the teacher.

The teacher might have probed for more conjectures, but she sensed that all were sufficiently questioning in attitude to go on. A most important skill for teachers to grasp in such situations is to know when to step in and have the pupils read on. No one could spell out all such circumstances, nor would one want to. Each situation varies; the teacher must, to a degree, "play it by ear."

This time the teacher did not realert the children about how to handle word-recognition needs. They knew what to do. More important, they knew they could ask for help and receive help without sensing a cool air of dissatisfaction on the part of the teacher or being scoffed at by the group. The learning climate was good. To know that you know that you do not know may be the beginning

of wisdom, but the next step is equally as important: to know what to do about what you do not know.

Throughout this silent reading session the teacher stayed alert, not only for requests for help but also to observe the pupils' reading performance. She watched for good reading posture, lip movement, finger pointing, facial reactions to the plot development, rate of reading and so on. Not all pupils closed their books at the same time, so she took advantage of these seconds by carrying on a person-to-person private conversation with a pupil or two. She asked, in a low whisper: "Did you find out what the magic garden is?" Children respond especially well to these brief sessions. They welcome the personal attention. Furthermore, doing this serves as a comprehension double check. A pupil reluctant to speak up to the group may be drawn into active participation in this way.

When all books were closed the comprehension check started at once. All the teacher said was, "Well?" in an invitation-to-respond way. In rapid order, now, they read lines orally to prove points about the garden and Uncle Green. Speculation about what might follow was so ripe that all the teacher needed to do was listen.

"I think the green giant will keep them in the garden," said one, "and they can't go home. That's why they call it one-time."

"I think they will get home again but they can't take the toys along," said another.

"Uncle Green looks very friendly. I think he will help them get home again with all kinds of toys."

Again the pupils are responsible for "reading" both the pictures and the text as they go on to the next two pages. The most obvious source of information is the two pictures. At this stage of reading progress, pupils should be schooled to this and turn first to the pictures. Note, too, how throughout this story the pictures have helped to carry the plot forward. In this instance, pupils are primed to see how the children return home. Both pictures provide no such evidence. In addition, both provide information but raise questions in the reader's mind: "What is Uncle Green giving Susan?" or "Why do Ned and Nancy look worried?" Answers to these questions can be found only in the text.

Note, too, how facing pages help carry the plot forward. The ideas presented are not what the children had expected. Yet they are plausible and "fit" the plot. The content does not sound contrived. The surprise element in the plot holds the reader's attention and keeps him involved in unraveling the story. This is as it should be. A good deal of careful planning, writing, and arranging is required to

set up a series of stories designed to be useful in the teaching of reading as a thinking process.

Again the teacher observes reading performance. Again she makes short but timely person-to-person visits. These checkup sessions keep the reader focused on meaning and foster the attitude paramount to successful reading for meaning. Certainly attention is and has been given to recognizing words, but it has been made clear to the child that the reason words are to be recognized is so that the plot can be comprehended.

When all books were closed, the comprehension-check session got under way at once. "The children didn't go home," said one lad with a certain amount of concern. "Why do you think they didn't?" asked the teacher. "Maybe this is a trick garden and they are trapped," was the reply. "Yes," said a girl. "Uncle Green looks too happy. I believe he tricked them."

"How many think the children are caught?" asked the teacher. Almost all the hands went up. Two children felt sure they would get home again, but weren't sure how. One boy thought the "one-time" idea meant that they could go home but never come back.

"Read on and find out," said the teacher.

All too often last pictures in materials designed for this level "give away" the story ending, and there is no need to read. In this instance, the picture did not give the obvious, and proved to be puzzling. The pupils needed to read to find out, and the teacher knew this.

Almost before the teacher could look around, the books were closed again. It was obvious by the "ohs" and "ahs" that the pupils had reached the end. All knew what "one-time magic garden" meant. During the discussion that followed the teacher asked a girl to read the line that proved the "one-time" point.

Before dismissing the group, the teacher printed the "new words" introduced in this story on the chalkboard. Then she asked different pupils to pronounce a word. Reading the new words in isolation represents a good check test. First, the words were met and dealt with in context. Now the double check occurs in isolation. If a child had not recognized a word in isolation, the teacher could have asked him to turn to the story and use context clues to recognition.

● Conclusion

Throughout this DRTA much thinking was going on. Purposes were set and altered as new information was supplied. Pictures as

well as text were read. Ideas were compared. Experiences and interests and knowledge were used fruitfully. Decisions were made. Oral rereading to prove points was done. New words were met and dealt with. Pupils participated eagerly on a give-and-take basis. The teacher did not tell the story or any part of it. The teacher did not dominate the reading-thinking act; she directed it. Pupils read to find answers to their conjectures and not to the teacher's questions. Even so, this teacher did ask questions but of the kind that stimulated thinking and kept the reading-thinking process moving ahead. She made important decisions essential to directing reading as a thinking process.

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Chapter 3

DIRECTED READING THINKING ACTIVITY ILLUSTRATION: THIRD READER LEVEL

• Introduction

THE STORY SELECTED to illustrate a directed reading thinking activity (DRTA) at the third grade level is entitled "An Old Letter." It is a five-page story with four illustrations. The story is based on a factual event. Consequently it is illustrative of the type material useful for gradually acquainting primary level children with the factual type material they will increasingly be called upon to utilize in the content oriented intermediate grades.

The story concerns a discovery made by a young boy (Donald) and his mother (Mrs. Short) while going through the contents of some old boxes in their home. They discover a letter written by the boy's great grandfather. Affixed to the letter is a stamp with a picture of Benjamin Franklin on it. Donald decides he would like to enter the stamp in a contest sponsored by his class in school. The mother and boy decide to first check on the authenticity of the stamp with the local postmaster. The postmaster offers to purchase it and suggests that the stamp be placed in a glass covered container before it is taken to school. The story ends with the boy remarking that, in their excitement, he and his mother had forgotten to read the letter.

The story covers five pages of text and is illustrated with four pictures. The illustrations consume approximately 25 percent of the space and provide a pictorial background for concept development and prediction.

*Russell G. Stauffer, Alvina Treut Burrows, and Millard H. Black. Into the Wind. Philadelphia, Penna.: John C. Winston Co., 1960, 176-180. Reproduced by permission of the authors and Holt, Rinehart and Winston.)

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• DRTA Dynamics

Obviously, this story could be handled in several different ways. One must guard against a routinized and stereotyped approach to presentation of a DRTA. The reader should note that this story provides different stopping point opportunities and that the stops suggested are different in number and nature from those used at the first level DRTA presented earlier. By varying the number of stopping points and the amount of information to which the student has access prior to making predictions, the teacher can provide various types of learning sets. Variation not only makes the process more interesting to the student but it also makes the DRTA a more versatile tool for exercising thinking skills and forging reading comprehension skills.

The job of the teacher in the DRTA process is to bring the pupils and the materials together in a milieu calculated to utilize the knowledge and experiential background of the learner. Every student is encouraged to set his own purposes by making his own educated guesses regarding possible outcomes. In this manner the student learns to deal with concepts in a thinking fashion for he is asked to process information in terms of a purpose he has helped to establish. In the DRTA, as it is conceived in this publication, the most active, the most verbal, and the most important participant is the student. This is not merely a platitude but a fact. The teacher does relatively little thinking, or decision making—these activities are reserved as the prerogative of the student. The teacher is cast in the role of the catalyst and the intellectual agitator, but never as the central figure necessary to the accomplishment of a DRTA for the day. This is not to suggest that the teacher does not have a pertinent role. She does, indeed, but it is different from the role of the student. The student must be given freedom to think, discuss, predict, and set his own purposes. When this type of freedom is part of the reading process, there is a greater likelihood that motivation, interest, and comprehension will be enhanced.

The concepts in this story will not be foreign to most students. There are millions of stamp collectors in the United States and many third grade students are familiar with the hobby. Furthermore, many students will be familiar with the experience of going through old boxes and trunks and discovering items of interest. Most third graders will likewise be familiar with school contests and hobby shows, post offices, and the man who runs the post office, the postmaster.

Five new words are introduced in this story. They are: *stamp, Franklin, contest, post office* and *postmaster.* It is almost certain that three of these words (*stamp, contest, post office*) will be in the speaking and listening vocabularies of most third graders. The other two words (*Franklin* and *postmaster*) will likely be familiar to a high percentage of third graders.

It is reiterated here that these five words are not to be pretaught or introduced prior to the reading of the story. To do so would deny the pupil an ideal opportunity to encounter the words in a context where he can employ his word attack skills. In most instances the words will already be known and hence preteaching would be inefficient and unnecessary. Those who do not have these new words as part of their existing reading vocabulary may now employ the word attack skills that teachers have been building over the years. Furthermore, to preteach the words would provide too many clues concerning story outcomes. As a result, conjecturing and hypothesizing would be based on information given by the teacher and not obtained by pupil reading.

Outlined below is a detailed illustration of how this story was developed with a group of average third grade students. For brevity's sake only portions of student-teacher dialogue are recorded.

STEP ONE: *Making predictions and setting purposes from title clues only.*

1. Instruct pupils to turn to the table of contents to locate the title of the story.
2. After the title has been located and read, initiate the prediction and purpose setting session with an open-ended question such as, "What do you think this story will be about?" or "What do you think will happen in this story?" The teacher should expect predictions to be quite divergent at this point since only a limited amount of information is available upon which to base conjectures. Divergent responses are the teacher's boon. The importance of divergent reactions as a legitimate thinking process have been well establishd by psychologists and educators.
3. Be sure that children have sufficient time to think and reflect during the prediction and purpose setting session. Make every effort to involve each child in this initial discussion.
4. The teacher should guard against injecting her own ideas and value judgments into the discussion. Basically, the teacher remains neutral during the purpose setting and prediction period. All of her comments should be designed to draw out the students' thinking.

Following are some of the purposes and predictions made by four

pupils in a group of third grade students when this story was directed in the manner outlined above.

Mark: I think the story will be about a letter that was lost in the post office for a long time and then delivered later.

Teacher: That's an interesting idea, Mark. How long ago do you think the letter was lost?

Mark: Twenty or thirty years, maybe.

Pat: I think it could be a letter that is worth a lot of money.

Teacher: Why do you think that?

Pat: Well, the title says it's an old letter and old letters sometimes have important things in them.

Walt: I think it could be a letter that is worth a lot of money, too.

Teacher: You agree with Pat then?

Walt: Yes.

Dick: It could be an old letter written by some famous person like Lincoln or Washington. If it is, they could sell it to a museum or someone.

Teacher: How old would you guess that the letter is, Dick?

Dick: Maybe a hundred years old.

Several students were asked the question, "How old do you think the letter is?" Estimates ranged from 20 to 300 years. It should be noted that the teacher's role revolved around the asking of open-ended questions. When the teacher commented on a student's prediction, it was worded to draw out an elaboration from the student. Student predictions and purposes were always honored. The weakest was accepted as well as the strongest, the plausible as readily as the implausible. When a student is willing to agree with another student's prediction this response should be accepted. A pupil can be asked why he accepts the other pupil's prediction. At other times as students become familiar with the process, the teacher may encourage each to venture a prediction of his own.

STEP TWO: *Examine illustrations and read text on pages 176-177.*

1. Direct the children to open their books to page 176.
2. Remind children not to look ahead in their books until directed to do so by the teacher. Some critics suggest that this notion stifles children's interest and desire to read. This is neither true nor is it a valid criticism. Such criticism ignores the fact that this is a *directed* lesson prepared by the teacher and designed for a specific instructional purpose. This purpose can best be accomplished by planning specific stopping places where instructional goals are realized. There are, obviously, many reading situations which the teacher can provide

to allow children to proceed at their own pace. The DRTA is not that place.

3. While the reading is in progress the teacher should carefully observe the pupils to note difficulties or to acknowledge requests for help. The teacher should visit with the pupils individually during the silent reading to provide encouragement or to give guidance.

STEP THREE: *Appraisal of predictions and purposes: adjustment, extension, refinement or rejection of original purposes and predictions.*

1. The teacher begins the discussion by asking questions such as "Who was right?" or "Did you find the answers to the questions you raised?" Sometimes a simple nod of the head will suffice as a cue for the students to begin the appraisal and readjustment period. This is especially true when the students and teacher are quite familiar and comfortable with the nuances of the DRTA.
2. The teacher should quickly check with each student to see how he has dealt with his original purposes and predictions. A simple question can get the process started. For example, "Well, Bob, were you right in what you said was going to happen?" If the student thinks that he has found the answer to his prediction or purpose, the teacher may then ask him to tell why he thinks he was right. Conversely, it may be desirable to ask a student why he thinks he was wrong. When this situation arises, it is quite appropriate to say, "Well, Bob, take another look at what you read and see if you can find the answer to the prediction you made." Most likely some pupil in the group will suggest this too.
3. It is essential to ask students to orally reread the lines that prove the validity of their predictions. Students must learn the necessity of adducing evidence to support their assumptions or to withhold judgment until sufficient evidence is available. If the teacher and the group do not demand proof of the validity of a student's predictions, critical evaluation during the reading act is less likely to occur. Of course, it is not necessary to request oral rereading of lines with every prediction. To do so would be pedantic and boring. It is important, however, over a period of time but perhaps not daily, for the teacher to allow each student an opportunity to exercise this skill. The practice of oral rereading to prove predictions gives validity and purpose to the oral reading act. Oral reading should be part of the DRTA process but only under the circumstances described.
4. Students should be given an opportunity to adjust their predictions and purposes. You will recall that the original predictions made by the group of third graders were in response to a title clue only. At this stage each student has had an opportunity to view two illustrations and has read two pages of the story. The students should now be capable of rejecting or modifying erroneous original purposes and

predictions, and of refining and extending predictions and purposes that had some validity. Predictions should now begin to converge on the focal point of the story since a fair number of clues regarding possible and plausible outcomes have been introduced in the two pages of text.

Following is a typical response from one student in the group described earlier:

Dick: I was wrong about it being a letter from a famous person.
Teacher: What did you read that makes you think you were wrong?
Dick: Well, it said the letter was written by Donald's great grandfather.
Teacher: Read the lines that tell who wrote the letter.
Teacher (to entire group): While Dick is reading the lines that prove his point the rest of us will close our books and listen. Then I want you to decide if he read the right lines. Be sure to keep your finger in the book so you can find your place again.

The other students in the group were given an opportunity to consider their original predictions in terms of their accuracy, use of clues and so on. Then each student was allowed to reject modify, extend, or refine his original purpose and prediction. At this point in the story the reader has a fair amount of information. It can be seen below that the predictions and purposes differ from the author's. The students predictions still represent utilization of story facts and student knowledge and experience.

Mark: Now I think Donald will take the stamp to school and he'll win first prize in the stamp contest.
Pat: I think he may take it to school too but he may lose it and then find it again. If he loses it his mother will be mad unless he finds it. I still think it will be worth a lot of money.
Teacher: The stamp or the letter?
Pat: The stamp.
Walt: I think Mark is going to be right.
Teacher: What do you think of Pat's idea?
Walt: Well, I don't think he'll lose it but she could be right about the stamp being worth a lot of money.
Teacher: Why?

The reader should note how student predictions have shifted in emphasis. It is obvious that students readily use their knowledge and background of experience in projecting possible outcomes. The students in this group were quite familiar with contests, stamp collecting, the value of old stamps, and mother's anger when something

is lost. Finally, it can be seen that the purposes and predictions reveal comprehension of the events and concepts in the story. Therefore, it is unnecessary to ask the group to retell story events. Nor is it necessary to ask them to recall irrevelant details. This common practice is of doubtful value under any circumstances. It is lethal to the development of reading-thinking skills.

STEP FOUR: *Direct students to read to the end of the story on page 180 (followup).*

1. After directing the extension and refinement of purposes and predictions the teacher tells the students to read to the end of the story.
2. The teacher observes the reading, noting student reactions and provides help where needed.
3. Word recognition help may be given to pupils individually while they are reading silently. The student should always be reminded to follow the appropriate self-help steps before the teacher provides help. If a student is unable to avail himself of the help the teacher provides, tell him the word and make a mental note to deal with this problem in the follow-up session or at a later time. Do not distract the entire group by interjecting a word recognition lesson for the entire group in the middle of the DRTA process.
4. When all students have completed the reading of the story the teacher initiates the final discussion period by asking an open-ended question such as, "Did you find the answer to your question?" or "Were you right about what you said?" This is also an appropriate time to allow the student to read aloud the lines that confirm or disprove original predictions.
5. Follow-up activities may include such things as word recognition practice, vocabulary meanings, projects, writing, discussions, and may vary according to instructional needs. The teacher should not feel that every DRTA needs a follow-up activity, however. It is sometimes appropriate to help students discover those clues which may have misled them or which they may not have used to best advantage. It is also important to help the student realize that although his predictions were not confirmed they may, nevertheless, have been quite as good as the author's own outcomes.

● Adapting to Content-type Reading

It is necessary that pupils receive training in how to deal with nonfictional discursive material: natural sciences, social sciences, biological sciences, and mathematics. This training can be initiated in the primary grades with suitable materials. It is good to teach the process in a so-called reading class because the preoccupation of

both the teacher and the pupil can be with acquisition of reading skill efficiency rather than with a grade in a subject.

Pupils will need to learn to read with specific purposes in mind when reading content-type material just as they did when reading fiction. To know what you are after is still the crux of the reading learning act. The act of discovery, backed up by a teacher who checks on the discoveries made, is the heart of the act. This is especially urgent since the reader now has a double obligation—to assimilate and retain the ideas and to use them in future occasions as they fit into longitudinal and in-depth refinement of an area of knowledge.

In content area reading it is imperative that the reader learn to take advantage of all clues or sources of information. He reads words; he also reads pictures, maps, graphs, charts, and so on. Each pictorial presentation may be worth a thousand words and they must be read. Accordingly, pupil reading must be more penetrating and thus thinking more judicious than ever before.

A marked difference in directing the reading of content materials is that the teacher needs to channel pupil thinking. This channeling is done along major concept lines—time or historical, space or geographical, people or social, numbers or numerical, and so on. In addition, during comprehension check time, teacher inquiry into major concepts is essential. New vocabulary and concepts take on scholarly significance. This is so because the reading is done to thoroughly understand, to assimilate, to remember, and to use.

Chapter 4

SUMMARY

THE ACCOUNT provided in this publication must not be thought to be an all-inclusive analysis of critical reading. It is not. It does, though, describe in theory and in practice the fundamental premises on which critical reading rests. Each child must be taught how to use his intellectual faculties for sizing up information and reaching acceptable and workable conclusions. As described, this process can be taught by using well-structured fiction that is planned to hold the reader's attention as well as provide plot development data and a timely climax or outcome or conclusion.

The teaching of reading-thinking skills must be initiated as early as possible in a reader's "reading to learn" program. This means that the training can and must be started for most readers sometime during the first year of formal education.

The basic difference between teaching reading as a thinking process in a group situation and the prevailing catechetical methods using preset questions and short literal answers is that the students think. Reading is a mental process and as such is akin to cognitive processes. The word process means action and suggests a way of acting upon. In reading, the process is mental and while it operates in a way similar to the acquisition of behavior patterns in the sensori-motor stage of infant development, it is different because language permits the child to deal with the world symbolically. Even so, problem solving in reading is as filled with "action" as is dealing with the world directly through motor activity.

The action of the reader is central to the application of the mental operations employed in grasping concepts or utilizing strategies. The cognitive activities of the reader require that his actions be *adaptive*. The intellectual activity or adaptation is an organizing activity and reflects the reader's intelligence or intellect. Just as intellectual adaptation from the sensori-motor period of infancy to the formal operations of maturity is the progressive differentiation and integration of experience and knowledge, so is attainment of reading

maturity a progressive adaptation and integration. Action is adaptive and intelligence is an adaptation or organizing activity whereby progressively more complex forms are balanced under the impact of experience.

In a directed reading-thinking activity as decribed in this text the problems or question raised by the reader are central. The reader must declare what he thinks or what he seeks or what he expects to find. From infancy on, an individual strives constantly for an increasing mastery of his world. At each stage he is concerned with comprehending those things which lie just beyond his grasp. They are distant enough to pose a novelty but not so distant as to be frustrating. It is this tendency to want to integrate schemata into increasingly more complex wholes that Piaget assumes is a native propensity of the mind. Similarly, the reader seems to possess a basic propensity of the mind to continue reading, to persist until mastery is acquired, if it is his appraisal or hypothesis that provides the steersmanship. His problems are not only essential to reading and to learning but also to keeping him on course. The steersmanship they provide represents the cybernetics of reading cognition.

The hard truth of thinking, learning, and communication suggests clearly that these intellectual processes cannot be programed. The use of representational symbols (language) to think and act is a function of the mind that requires individual action. While different individuals may possess individual styles, the elegance of clear thinking is a universal that all must acquire. Deliberate control of covert actions requires a hardheaded approach that is adaptive to the syntax and semantics of written language.

It is an intellectual achievement of some magnitude when a child through reading finds the answers to questions he raised. The strength of the motivation that stems from the intellectual commitment of a question asked constitutes perhaps the highest form of pragmatic scholarly stimulations. To put this in less cosmic terms, the reader who strives constantly for more and more comprehension is the one who is propelled forward by his own curiosity. Anyone who has ever watched a well-directed reading-thinking activity has been impressed with the persistence, the resistance to satiation, of a reader intent on finding an answer to a question or commitment he has raised.

In the classrooms of our schools the most essential teaching variable is the teacher. It is her attitude toward reading and thinking and instruction that makes the difference. The teacher must be dedicated to the proposition that reading is a mental process and

that efficient performance must be taught. The nature and complexity of the materials of a spiraling curriculum dictate that reading must be taught at all levels and in all areas of knowledge.

It may not be true that you can induce a child to read anything if your approach is that fundamental to a directed reading-thinking activity, but it appears that you can teach him to read a great deal more and in a more scholarly way than anyone might have guessed. In a democratic culture one cannot afford for one minute to become careless on this score. Pupils free to question are also responsible for proof. They learn to have the strength of their convictions and the courage to deal with ideas. It is from the context of directed reading-thinking activities that scholars will emerge who know what it means to hypothesize, to search for evidence, to suspend judgment, to select the relevant to make a considered judgment, and to test for accuracy. The hope of discovery and the discipline of accuracy are the bench marks of the reader seeking maturity and of the scholar seeking truth. In the final analysis it is the art of question asking that provides the commitment and motivation of a scholar and this is what counts.